

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 13 with the following amended paragraph:

Two channels connect slot 7 to each of the normal slots (slots 1-6 and 9-14), one shown as a solid line and the other shown as a dashed line. For example, a channel 202 connects a zone 2 connector of slot 2 to a zone 2 connector of slot 7, and a channel 204 connects a zone 2 connector of slot 2 to a zone 3 connector of slot 7. Similarly, two channels connect slot 8 to each of the normal slots, one shown as a solid line and the other shown as a dashed line. For example, a channel 206 connects a zone 2 connector of slot 2 to a zone 2 connector of slot 8, and a channel 208 connects a zone 2 connector of slot 2 to a zone 3 connector of ~~slot 7~~slot 8.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to FIG. 5, the interconnection topology 200 supports a dual-star topology 220, where the normal slots (slots 1-6 and 9-14) interface with normal line cards 106, and the extended slots (slots 7 and 8) interface with extended switch cards 108 that form centralized switching hubs. The switch cards 108 and the line cards 106 are set up so to have information on which channel is connected to which slot. In one example, the ~~line cards switch cards line cards~~ and switch cards are provided with information on which switch card functions as a primary switch and which switch card functions as a secondary switch. Because there are two channels between each line card 106 and each switch card 108, the dual-star topology 220 supports increased data throughput (e.g., 20 Gbs), which can be twice as much as the data throughput (e.g., 10 Gbs) provided by conventional ATCA backplanes.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 29 with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to FIG. 7, the interconnection topology 200 supports a dual-dual-star ~~topology 230~~ topology 330, where two switch hubs occupy four slots (slots 6-9). Each of the normal slots 1-5 and 10-14 interfaces with a normal line card 106. One centralized switch 332 is configured to interface with a normal slot 6 and an extended slot 7, and utilizes the zone 2 connectors of slot 6, and zone 2 and zone 3 connectors of slot 7. Another centralized switch 334 is configured to interface with an extended slot 8 and a normal slot 9, and utilizes the zone 2 connectors of slot 9, and zone 2 and zone 3 connectors of slot 8. For clarity of illustration, in FIG. 7, all channels that connect to slots 1, 2, 13, and 14 are shown, only some channels that connect to slots 6-9 are shown, and channels that connect to slots 3-5 and 10-12 are not shown.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

As another example, referring to FIG. 20, a specification can specify that two or more backplanes 370 that support connectors 372 for switch fabric interface be arranged in a cabinet in which an area (or areas) 374 between the backplanes be used to support user defined functionalities. FIG. 21 shows a ~~backplane 360~~ backplane 380 having additional connectors 382 in area 374, where the connectors 382 support the switch fabric interface to provide additional data channels.